



FORGET THE RESOLUTIONS – SET NEW YEAR'S GOALS!

New Year's resolutions. Everybody makes 'em; everybody breaks 'em – or so it seems. A 2007 survey by the FranklinCovey time management firm found that 80 percent of people who begin the year by pledging to make improvements in their lives fail to keep their promises. With that kind of failure rate, it's no wonder many people see making New Year's resolutions as nothing more than a gesture toward tradition. If a resolution is fulfilled, "Great!" But if it has been abandoned by February, it's no big deal.

That's why it's a good idea to forget resolutions and set New Year's goals instead. Saying we will reach a goal implies a process and planning. These are the keys to self-improvement success. Here are examples of turning a few of the most popular New Year's resolutions into New Year's goals:

- » **Lose Weight:** Be specific and realistic about what you're trying to accomplish in a year's time. Your EAP is a terrific resource for weight management. You can get motivational coaching and information that will help you understand how increased exercise, improved diet and other lifestyle changes will enable you to lose weight and keep it off. And keeping excess weight off is the true test of success. Make this a part of your goal for the year. If six months is a reasonable time for reaching your target weight, shoot for it. If you reach it, make maintaining your healthier weight for the rest of the year the next phase of your goal.
- » **Quit Smoking:** Tobacco is highly addictive, and the habit can be extremely difficult to give up. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that while nearly 70 percent of smokers say they want to quit, only about 6 percent succeed. Simply saying you'll quit is seldom enough. It will take time and you may need help. Studies show that tobacco cessation programs increase smokers' chances of quitting. Ask your EAP about the Tobacco Cessation Coaching that's available to you. It can provide the motivation and support you over the time you need to kick the habit for good.
- » **Get Personal Finances in Order:** Determine what you want to accomplish financially in the coming year. Set markers – Every three months? At the mid-year point? – for measuring your progress. Many people see cutting up credit cards as the cure-all for their financial problems. That may be a good start, especially if you're overburdened by debt from reckless credit card use. But it is seldom enough to put you on sound financial footing over the long haul. For that to happen, you have to understand how you got into financial trouble and how to avoid the same mistakes in the future. Knowing the basics of budgeting – figuring out exactly how much money you have coming in and how you're spending it – is the key. Your EAP can help you get financial planning consultations to address credit card debt, retirement, saving for college and more.

Do you want to make changes that will improve your quality of life? Call your EAP!

Your Employee Assistance Program can help you make changes that will make a difference. You can ask about issues such as:

- Financial planning
- Nutrition and physical fitness
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Stress reduction

Call any time for a telephonic consultation.

(866) EAP-4SOC | (866) 327-4762
TDD callers: (800) 327-0801

Or visit us online at:
www.eap4soc.mhn.com

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- » **Exercise More:** Keeping active is good for your physical and emotional health. But when you set out to begin exercising or to take your exercise to another level, you need to have a plan. You don't try to run a marathon if you haven't so much as jogged in years. You shouldn't get into weightlifting without knowing the techniques that will help you avoid injuries. If you're starting to exercise for the first time or trying to get back into it after a years-long layoff, check with your doctor first. Once you get started, make exercise a part of your routine, not something you do in your spare time. Monitor yourself over the course of the year, looking for improvements such as increased stamina, better weight management and improved balance. Seeing changes like these will motivate you to keep it up.

There are other things you can promise to do that will make for a healthier and happier life. You can do many of them on your own. For those they require help, call your EAP. And if you think of these things as goals you have to plan and work toward, you're much more likely to succeed in doing them.

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